

Members

Rep. Terri Austin, Chairperson
Rep. Dennie Oxley
Rep. Sandra Blanton
Rep. Phil Hinkle
Rep. Cleo Duncan
Rep. Douglas Gutwein
Sen. Travis Holdman, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. Thomas Wyss
Sen. Scott Schneider
Sen. James Arnold
Sen. Timothy Skinner
Sen. Greg Taylor



INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON DRIVER EDUCATION

LSA Staff:

Susan Montgomery, Attorney for the Committee
James Sperlik, Attorney for the Committee

Authority: P.L. 101-2009

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 13, 2009
Meeting Time: 9:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Terri Austin, Chairperson; Rep. Dennie Oxley; Rep. Sandra Blanton; Rep. Phil Hinkle; Rep. Cleo Duncan; Rep. Douglas Gutwein; Sen. Travis Holdman, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Thomas Wyss; Sen. Scott Schneider; Sen. James Arnold; Sen. Timothy Skinner; Sen. Greg Taylor.

Members Absent: None.

Chairperson Austin called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. The members of the Committee introduced themselves.

1. Michael Witter, Jim Wright, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

Michael Witter, Regional Administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Region 5, spoke to the Committee concerning the high crash

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be obtained electronically by requesting copies at licrequests@iga.in.gov. Hard copies can be obtained in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for hard copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for hard copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

rates of teen drivers in the first few months after obtaining a driver's license. He gave the Committee copies of various documents (Exhibits A, B, C, and D) relating to driver education. NHTSA's goal is to have novice drivers taught how to drive safely and to have statutory language concerning graduated drivers' licenses (GDL) throughout the 50 states. He urged not less than 45 hours classroom training and 10 hours of driving in a driver education course, as students are inexperienced and immature. NHTSA works with Ryan Klitzsch, Traffic Safety Division Director, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI).

Jim Wright, Driver Licensing/Driver Education Program, NHTSA, stated that driver education classes are but one part of a comprehensive program to help make novice drivers safer. The driver education community is working together in the development of national administrative standards and has already developed curriculum standards and model curricula. Responding to Senator Holdman, Mr. Wright stated that the evidence is weak, at best, to show that driver education reduces teen crashes; NHTSA's stance is not research based, but rather expert opinion based. Safer teen driving will result with strong GDL laws, strong parental involvement, and strong law enforcement presence. Senator Wyss commented on the importance of prosecutors not using any diversion programs for teen drivers who violate traffic laws as a method of stronger law enforcement. Mr. Wright thinks that some law enforcement officers may not ticket young drivers, assuming that to do so would be very time-consuming with paperwork and follow-up action. Senator Wyss was concerned about Indiana's listing in Exhibit D wherein Indiana is shown to have no nighttime driving restrictions and no listing in "Passenger Restrictions"; this is no longer valid after the passage of SB 16 (2009). Mr. Wright promised to take a look at those items and to revise them if necessary. In response to Chairperson Austin, Mr. Wright commented that the first few months after driver education training are the most important in remembering the lessons learned, and that there is no good data comparing efficacy between on-line and in-person driver education training. Responding to Senator Schneider, Mr. Wright stated that there have been more teen male crash deaths in the past, but statistics are beginning to show an upturn in girls' deaths.

Senator Skinner commented that as a high school teacher, he sees students' lives change after obtaining a license; he sees performance in the classroom go down when a job to earn money for the car becomes the priority. Mr. Wright stated that New Jersey has the lowest 16 year old fatality rate as it does not license drivers until age 17, and now requires that a GDL indicator be placed on the license plate. Mr. Wright believes that the driving practice requirements that the states set are a minimum, and that parents should place restrictions and oversight beyond that minimum.

2. Cari Baylor, Baylor Trucking, Milan, Indiana

Cari Baylor is the third generation to work for her family's trucking company. She stated that freight traffic will double in the next decade. Trucks and other motor vehicle operators must work together practicing safe driving to make safe highways. In 2007, 26.9% of all fatal crashes involving trucks also involved teen drivers. Ms. Baylor spoke of a safety outreach program from the American Trucking Association (ATA) called "Share the Road". She gave the Committee Exhibit E, which includes a video about the program and showed the video to the Committee. She reminded the Committee that semi-trailers have blind spots; if you can't see the truck driver in the side mirror, the driver cannot see you. ATA would be happy to assist Indiana with a "Teens and Trucks" program.

3. Wayne Crowder, American Trucking Association

Wayne Crowder reminded the Committee that semi-trailers have a blind spot, and that current Federal law only requires a large outside mirror and no additional circular mirror on

that outside mirror. The younger generation of drivers has more distractions than ever, but all drivers have to learn how to share the road together. Senator Taylor remarked on the lack of driver courtesy that he sees now.

4. Sherry Deane, American Automobile Association, Hoosier Motor Club (AAA)

Ms. Deane stated that motor vehicle accidents are the number one cause of teen deaths. (Ms. Deane's remarks are attached as Exhibit F.) While the GDL law that was passed in the 2009 legislative session was a start to safer teen drivers, the educational component of driver education is still lacking. Recent studies show that professionally taught driver education makes a difference in teen crash rates compared to parent taught teens. Parents play a vital role by setting additional parameters for the new drivers. Currently 22 states require driver education in order for an individual under age 18 to be granted a license. As of next summer, Indiana will only give a three month advantage to a new driver applicant who has taken driver education, which virtually eliminates an incentive to take a driver education program. AAA believes this needs to be addressed. AAA looked into running driver education schools, but found out it would lose a large amount of money if it did so. The biggest costs to run a private commercial driver education school are cars, insurance, buildings, and staff. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has no list available of public schools that offer driver education, so Ms. Deane wonders how IDOE can oversee or regulate a program if it does not know where the programs exist. Responding to Senator Holdman, Ms. Deane stated her opinion would be that ICJI should handle all facets of driver education regulation and oversight as one goal of ICJI is to reduce vehicle crashes. She also stated that the "Share the Road" program is a valuable training tool.

5. Stan Henderson, Coordinator, Driver Education Programs, Indiana State University

Mr. Henderson stated driver education currently is not a large part of the high school curriculum and that in 2006, 208 teens died in motor vehicle related accidents. He stated that greater focus must be placed on perceptual skills and social interaction with other highway users. He feels that the Indiana curriculum for driver education needs to be updated, and that the law needs to be changed to require remedial driver education if a teen driver has one accident or receives one ticket. He believes that action needs to be taken to improve and expand instructor training, improve the curriculum for new drivers, regulate parental involvement, and improve oversight by responsible agencies, in order to empower new drivers to be better equipped to meet the challenges of driving.

6. Tom Pagan, Executive Director, and Dave Wilkerson, Director of Driver Education, Central Indiana Educational Service Center (CIESC)

Mr. Pagan gave the Committee Exhibit G, the CIESC's Annual Report. He stated that the CIESC's driver education program is the largest in Indiana (p.12 of Exhibit G), with its classroom content approved by IDOE and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) and all instructors certified in driver education. The CIESC had on-line driver education approved by IDOE and BMV (before its responsibilities were transferred to ICJI). Mr. Pagan stated that the CIESC offers many academic classes on-line (p. 12 of Exhibit G), so he feels that to offer driver education in this manner should be acceptable as being safe and secure.

Responding to Chairperson Austin, Mr. Wilkerson stated that the CIESC ensures that the curriculum viewer is the same person who signed up for the course by assigning security questions. There is also a PIN number assigned at account log-in. Each time that the person logs back on, there are security questions asked in order to enable the course to start at the same point where it stopped. There is 24 hour technology support for the

course. Time constraints kept Mr. Pagan and Mr. Wilkerson from demonstrating the on-line course.

Chairperson Austin thanked the presenters of testimony for their appearances. She reminded all in attendance that the next meeting of the Committee would be October 29th, 2009 at 9 a.m. in Room 233, and stated that the Committee would not be proposing any legislation for the 2010 Session. Chairperson Austin adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.